

Okolona Messenger.

FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE SUNNY SOUTH.

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OUR AIM: To Tell the Truth, Obey the Law, and Make Money.

OUR MOTTO: Talk for Home, Work for Home, and Fight for Home.

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DEFENSE OF THE GROUNDHOG.



GREAT many hasty or ill natured persons have been criticizing the groundhog because for the past week or ten days the weather has been, so they allege, comparatively mild. Says the Birmingham News. They contend that the groundhog is discredited as a prophet, and is not even in the class with the goosebone, the signal service man and other more or less unreliable prognosticators of weather conditions.

This sudden aspersion must be born of envy. Nearly every American cherishes a secret ambition to be a weather prophet, and it is galling to a small soul to be outdone in precedence by an animal that spends six months of the year in a hole in the ground. Therefore at the first opportunity the groundhog is held up to ridicule and made the target of jeers, sneers and sneers. It's wrong. It is an indefensible injustice perpetrated upon a most deserving animal. The groundhog is not pretentious. It has the shrinking nature which is so often the concomitant of innate worth. It does not carry a bill-poster or a brass band around with it to attract public notice, but quietly and unobtrusively year in and year out on the second day of February it lets the sometimes unappreciative world know whether it will be a late or an early spring. This information is imparted without cost to any taxpayer. The weather of the United States government is maintained at a yearly expense of two cents per capita. Every man, woman and child in the United States must pay the price of a postage stamp to maintain a system of guessing at the weather. It should also be borne in mind that the weather bureau, even in moments of wildest abandon, does not presume to forecast more than thirty-six hours ahead of time, and even at that is very often wrong. The groundhog, upon the other hand, gives a prediction covering six weeks of futurity, and does not levy a per capita tax for it either. Gratitude, therefore, to say nothing of personal respect should still the mouth of slander.

The groundhog is not discredited in the minds of the thinking and cooperative element of our citizenship. It was not to be expected that there should be a cold wave every day or that the North Pole should be moved inside the city limits.

The groundhog has said that there will be severe weather until the end of March, and severe weather there will be in spite of skeptics, critics and ill-mannered iconoclasts. The weather is now colder than usual at this time of the year, as friends of the groundhog can prove by statistics. The attempt to deprive the groundhog of his well earned reputation is underhanded and unmanly. It can only react upon the heads of those who commit an offense by out of keeping with appreciation of justice and fair dealing.

A Missouri editor announced that for just one issue he would tell the truth. Here are a few items from that issue: "John Bonin, the laziest merchant in town, made a trip to Bellevue yesterday. John Doyle, our grocer, is doing a poor business. His store is dusty, dirty and noisily odoriferous. How can he expect to do much? Rev. Styx preached Sunday night on charity. The sermon was punk. If the reverend gentleman would live up a little closer to what he preaches he'd have bigger congregations. Dave Snooky died last Saturday at his home in this place. The doctor gave it out as heart failure. The fact is, he was drunk and whiskey is what killed him. His home was a rented shack on Ruddy street. Married—Miss Sylvia Rhodes and James Oshman last Saturday evening in the Baptist parsonage. The bride is a very ordinary town girl, who doesn't know any more than a rabbit about cooking and who never helped her mother three days in her life. She is not a beauty by any means and has a gait like a fat duck. The groom is well known here as an up-to-date loafer. He has been living off the old folks all his life and don't amount to shucks. They will have a hard life while they live together and the News has no congratulations to offer, for we don't believe any good can come from such a union." The issue in which the Missouri editor told the truth was the last he ever made. Now, in the springtime, when the dew like diamonds sparkles in the tender grass, where sweet throated birds make melody all the day, subscribers to his paper while it was published, drive out in the country a short way to look upon a piece of black skin which hangs suspended from a barb wire fence. It is all that remains of the once manly form of the Missouri editor who "told the truth for once."

Two men were disputing over their respective churches. Finally one of them called to a neighbor who was passing by and asked his opinion as to which was the only church in which to be saved. said: "I have been hauling wheat to the mill high on to forty years. Now there's several roads lead to the mill. Sometimes I go one, sometimes t'other. And never yet, friends, has the miller ask me which road I took, but he always asks: 'Is your wheat good?'"

If Japan should win she can be easily curbed by the other powers, but not so with Russia, and this is another reason why sympathy is with the Japs.

OKOLONA

Many Natural Advantages.—Ships Annually 20,000 Bales of Cotton and 1,000 Car Loads of Hay.—Important Railroad Relay Division.

THIS beautiful, enterprising and prosperous City, located in the midst of the most fertile lands of the State and at an elevation higher than any other point on the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, between Cairo, Ill. and Mobile, Ala., possesses in a pre-eminent degree advantages that few towns in Mississippi have. It is one of the healthiest cities in the South, having never had an epidemic of any kind, and its elevation gives it immunity from malarial troubles of every description. The water supply is an abundant one, which is obtained from wells 600 feet deep, and is conveyed through cast iron pipes to every portion of the City. The water is as clear as a crystal, delightfully cool, and the analysis shows that it is free from all organic matter and not only the purest and best for drinking, but also splendid for using in boilers and engines. The climate is simply superb. The winters are short and mild, while the summers are pleasant; scarcely a day passes that is not refreshed by the gentle and invigorating breeze which sweeps over the prairies laden with the aroma of the thousands of wild flowers which bedeck and give an air of enchantment to the landscapes in every direction.

Commercially, no town in the State has a higher rating than Okolona. She enjoys a lucrative trade from several adjoining counties, and receives nearly every year from the wagon trade alone eighteen to twenty thousand bales of cotton. This is also an extensive shipping point for cattle, poultry and eggs, which go out in carload lots to New Orleans, St. Louis, Chicago and New York. Okolona has the reputation of shipping more hay than any other town in the South, and has a building erected for the reception of hay alone, which in magnitude exceeds anything of the kind in the State. The hay lands produce from two and one-half to four tons per acre, and of a most excellent quality, which finds a ready market at all seasons of the year.

When you come to the question of schools and churches, Okolona takes an advanced position. She has a beautiful school building which cost \$25,000, well equipped with a fine library and all the modern appliances, and is under the management of the best and most efficient teachers to be obtained. The churches are good substantial buildings, representing the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and Catholic denominations.

The City owns and boasts of having one of the best and most thoroughly equipped water and electric light plants in the State.

A branch of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad is now being built from Okolona in a westerly direction, which directly connects us with the finest hard wood timbered lands in the State, making this pre-eminently one of the best locations for manufacturing industries of every kind, and especially a desirable location for factories that will turn out spokes, handles, furniture, coffins, vehicles of all kinds and wooden novelties of every description, as well as cotton factories and cotton seed oil mills.

The citizens of Okolona are offering special inducements to have manufacturing industries of every kind located here. The City Council offers to give water and electric lights free for five years, and make the taxes just as small as possible; in fact, to agree on such a price as will be sure to meet with the approval of the manufacturer, while the citizens under the organization of the Commercial Club propose to give a location free to all manufacturers, so long as the lot is used for the purpose for which it was donated.

The Mobile and Ohio Railroad is now putting in the largest yard of any railroad in the State, and it is believed from the magnitude of the work now under headway that they will soon have their machine shops located here. The relay station and round-house is already here, as the machine shops are naturally to be expected. The various industries already in existence at this place are rapidly making money, so if you are looking for a first class location to erect a manufacturing establishment of any kind come to Okolona, Miss., and see the splendid natural advantages you will have and meet the social, genial people who cordially invite you to become a citizen of their City and, at the same time, will co-operate with you in building up successfully whatever business you may engage in.

Very respectfully,
W. A. BODENHAMER, Mayor.
E. S. ELLIOTT, Jr., President City Council.
H. L. MORRISON, Pres. Commercial Club.
Approved by City Council as a body.
For special or further information address Secretary Commercial Club, Okolona, Miss.

GOD SAVE THE CZAR—GOD HELP PEOPLE.



THE war between Russia has begun, says the Chicago American.

Men and women in Russia are singing the national anthem, "God Save the Czar."

The Czar is safe in his palace, and will remain safe many miles from the scene of actual fighting. His subjects are crowded on battleships and transport ships carrying them to the front, where their throats will be cut or their bodies blown into a thousand pieces by bursting shells.

The mothers wave their hands to their sons and husbands marching off—never to see them again—and all sing "God Save the Czar" with genuine enthusiasm and piety.

It is the old story of war—the curious old story of human nature and stupidity—the masses of the people marching to butchery to the tune of a national air, while the autocrat who sets them fighting remains safely at home.

The beginning of this war is the beginning of Russia's serious attempt to gain control of Asia and make her Emperor Emperor of Asia—Emperor of one-half of the world.

The great ambition of the Russians, handed down from one Czar to another, remaining intact despite individual dissipation, frequent sudden deaths and assassinations, is to make one more big struggle for its realization.

Control of the earth is the modest ambition of the Russian Czar. Their natural tendency was westward, and toward conquest of civilized Europe, as a preliminary to taking on the rest of the world.

But westward the Russians have been unable to spread.

The great backbone of the German people, with a million armed men, officered by men like Moltke, stands a solid wall, against which the Russians might beat in vain.

England holds Gibraltar, and the powers of Europe unite to close the Dardanelles to warships. This keeps the Czar's navy from making conquests in the Mediterranean. The European agreement has kept the Black Sea bottled up.

Unable to expand in the direction of strong Western civilization, the Russians have been preparing to spread out into the East, and their war against Japan, carefully thought out and prearranged, begins their war for the conquest of Asia.

Give them Japan and China, with untold millions of men to count upon, and they will be able to use those men to take all of Asia, to conquer the meek people of India and take that country and the English.

This is the third great scheme for the conquest of Asia that we read of in history.

Alexander the Great tried it, and he succeeded. He conquered Asia, using Asiatics to fight Asiatics, in addition to his own Macedonians.

But while he conquered Asia, he could not conquer Alexander. He died, after wearing purple cloth for a short time in Babylon, and the great Asiatic empire of which he had dreamed fell to pieces.

Napoleon dreamed also of Asiatic conquest. He even planned the costume which he should wear riding around on an elephant, and decided that an Eastern religion would suit him better than the Christian religion—all religions being alike indifferent to him. His incursion into Egypt was a feeble and rather a disastrous step toward Asiatic conquest. He felt and he said that Europe was a mere nothing, and that Asia was the real field for a conqueror.

His dreams of Asiatic conquest ended on the Island of St. Helena.

How are the Asiatic dreams of the Russians to end? That is the question which this war may settle, at least for the present.

Alexander went into Asia when Asia was at its flabby and defenseless as a rotten orange. Power and discipline had weakened the rulers, and, after his troops' first surprise at meeting elephants, his progress was as easy as a knife cutting into soft cheese.

The Russians begin their attack upon Asia under very different conditions. They face a small, determined, intelligent, ruthless people, combining the vigor of a primitive, half-savage race with knowledge of modern war, wonderful resources and, in addition, the sympathy of civilization.

Japan stands in the eyes of the world as a nation that has successfully combated adverse conditions. She has thrown aside foolish traditions of autocracy and has developed along modern lines. She defeated, with the greatest ease, her powerful Chinese neighbor.

Russia, on the other hand, represents the perpetuation of autocratic government and autocratic brutality in all its forms.

It would indeed be a sad day for the world if victory should go to those things which Russia stands for in government—the autocratic rule of one man, representing both heavenly and earthly powers, unscrupulously exercised by corrupt advisers, in whose hands he is a tool.

The situation is complicated, and very seriously complicated, by the fact that the English by treaty have promised to defend the Japanese should any other nation take a hand in the war. The French, on their part, have promised to side with Russia should she find herself engaged in a three-handed conflict.

It is possible, therefore, that the world may see the great French nation, a genuine and a georgious

republic, fighting to establish a brutal, autocratic government on the ruins of the ambitious Japanese people.

Those who hope for the victory of little Japan have one great fact to comfort them:

In Japan all minds are passionately patriotic and devoted to the government, eager for its success.

In Russia it is ignorance, servile stupidity that sings "God Save the Czar" when it sees long lines of political prisoners, dressed in white, vanishing into Siberia. If the Czar wins he must win without the sympathy of intelligent men, even in his own country.

If the Japanese lose, they will be defeated in spite of a patriotic, united, determined people's obstinate defense.

The United States, free from any danger of conflict, despite some alleged little misunderstanding with Korea as to guaranteeing her neutrality, will profit for the time being.

We shall sell oats to the Russian and Japanese cavalry, shoes, cloths, wheat, canned meats, and all other goods to the armies. We shall demand and we shall get cash.

But, in the long run, all parts and all peoples of the earth are tied together. The distraction of life in Japan and in Russia will mean so many fewer mouths for us to feed in the future. We shall do a rushing business now, but our customers will die by tens of millions. And we shall suffer, with the rest of humanity, through the reintroduction of useless, brutal wars as a means of settling quarrels or of seizing property.

Such a proposition as that which Mr. Hay has made to the other Powers in regard to the neutrality of the Chinese Government and the integrity of the territory of China so far transcends in importance all ordinary transactions, even those on the largest scale, as to make them seem trivial and unimportant, says the Cincinnati Enquirer. Men of great ability negotiate for months over the transfer of small tracts of land, or the purchase of a railroad, and consider that they are engaged in large affairs, but here is one man who, from his office in Washington, sets on foot a movement beneficial in its purpose, and so comprehensive in its effects, as to involve the fates of empires, and the peace and happiness of millions of people. The scope of the note appears to be not only to prevent the Chinese Empire from being drawn into the existing war, and preserve it from foreign aggression, but to prevent the fighting between the Powers themselves, which would probably follow, if it were understood that the bars were down and China open to indiscriminate conquest. War having broken it is in the interest of the civilized world to limit its area and minimize its effects to the utmost possible extent. Details of Mr. Hay's note are not yet public, but it is hardly to be supposed that it is intended to cover Korea and Manchuria. They comprise as yet the seat of war, and, whichever side wins, it would doubtless assert the right to deal with the territory immediately involved, from the standpoint of a victorious party, and would be in a position to maintain it. Neither Russia nor Japan again would be likely to submit tamely to such conditions as were forced upon Japan after her victory over China, making it substantially a barren one, but aside from Manchuria and Korea, the situation seems to be well within the control of the other Powers. Other considerations of self interest and humanity must impel them at the present time to check the spread of war. Whether the note succeeds or not, no one can fail to recognize the high and disinterested motive evinced by the proposal.

It is interesting to speculate on the possible result of signal land victories by the Japanese in Korea and Manchuria. Already, the Russian railroad has been "broken" by the blowing up of an important bridge in Manchuria, and in all likelihood the feat will be repeated in various places along the long railroad line connecting Russia proper with the Far East. The Japs are adepts in this species of warfare, and tactics of the kind are absolutely necessary to keep the Mikado's forces from being, in time, overwhelmed by sheer force of numbers. It is not improbable that Japan can throw a sufficient force upon the mainland of Asia to successfully cope with the large Russian army already in the field. The element of real danger to the doughy little Japs is Russia's ability to send reinforcements across Siberia. Some great Japanese victories will have to be won on the banks of the Yalu and back of Port Arthur before trans-Siberian railroad can be destroyed far enough west to seriously hamper Russia in pouring her reserves across the Siberian steppes. Japan has already established her supremacy on the sea. Her next great strategic step must be to cut the Siberian and Manchurian railroads far enough back to compel long overland marches of the czar's reinforcements. It may be that some decisive battles will have to be fought before this can be accomplished, for guerrilla methods of railroad breaking are necessarily but partial in their results and only temporarily embarrass an enemy.

The Minnesota supreme court has not as much work to do as the Missouri supreme court, but it seems to be just as willing.

Baltimore pluck soars above the ashes of the burned district. And soon the Monumental City will be more beautiful and substantial than before.